"Have Faith in God."

This Jesus said to his disciples, in answer to their wondering exclamation on seeing the fig tree withered away. They were astonished at the power of his word as seen in that sudden and utter death which overtook the fruitless tree. From that point he went on to tell them that mountains might be removed and trees plucked up by the roots by those who had "faith in God." He bade them when they prayed to believe that they received the things asked for and they should have them.

We had occasion to quote this saying of our Lord to a good brother who was formely associated in a union of several churches for the purpose of carrying forward evangelistic work. His reply was: "When I see this town moved by the preaching of the Gospel, and the Church thoroughly aroused to a sense of Christian responsibility, I will believe that mountains can be removed and trees plucked up by the roots." That is "when I see, I will believe." We fear that there is much of this kind of faith (?) among God's people. But this is not what our Lord bids us. He says: "Have faith in God." What is it to have faith in God?

Faith is the sight which the soul has of things not seen. Faith acts and is confident when there is nothing but the naked Word of God to warrant her. Faith stands with the Word of God in her hand and looks out upon a community wholly given up to worldiness, wickedness and spiritual indifference, and counts converts by hundreds, and sees the Church revived, and the community stirred by the movings of the power of the Holy Ghost. Faith pierces the armor of indifference and opposition and anticipates the victory for God and the truth. She marches around the walls of Jericho at the word of the Lord, and at his word shouts the shout of victory when as yet no crack in the wall or sign of falling is visible to the eye.

As a rule we are prone to look only to the favoring or non-favoring circumstances as the ground of our faith. If the churches are united, if the people of God are praying and if sinners are eager to hear the Word of God, and the whole community look with favor and approval upon a religious movement, then there are those whose faith is strong. On the other hand, if there is no hearty unity, if the people of God are "conservative" and indifferent; if sinners are scoffing or unheeding, and the community immersed in worldliness and sin, then these same brethren are ready to say, there is no use trying to do anything here. Our Lord's word was that we should have "faith in God," not in the churches, or in the people, whether saints or sinners.

Faith in God is warranted by the revelation which he has made of himself in his Word, especially in the face of Jesus Christ. By his revelation we know that his disposition toward this world is one of grace; and not only is that his disposition, but his purpose is one of grace. His heart is set on the salvation of men. His thoughts concerning us are thoughts of peace and not of evil. He desires that we should have the expected end for which we pray. It is his pleasure that sinners should be saved; it is his grief that they are not, because they will not. But faith knows more than that God has a purpose, of grace and good will to man. She knows that he has all power as well, and that all his power is pledged to the accomplishing of his purpose of grace. If concerning any enterprise we are engaged in as agents, we know that our principal is in full accord, nay, that we are only carrying out his will and that he has the power to give us success in our work, we go to that work with confidence, nothing doubting.

But the trouble is, says the doubter, "we do not see the success which we strive for. We ask and we do not receive; we pray and we are not answered; we work and we do not see the fruit of our labors. How is this undoubted state of things reconcilable with the declaration of God's good will and power?

Well, we make answer, that Faith not only believes in God, but she believes in God's method's; and while taking hold of his promise for the victories pledged, she also devotes herself steadfastly to the means ordained of God for the accomplishment of the expected end. God has nowhere said that he would *unconditionally* bring men to repentance and give success to his word. On the other hand he has clearly told us that salvation is of such a nature that it makes both the consent and co-operation of the soul to be saved and the instrument used in its salvation necessary. God saves no soul against that soul's hearty consent. God uses no man to bring about the salvation of another soul except on terms explicitly laid down in his Word. Let us illustrate:

"Wilt thou be made whole?" said our Lord to the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda. So soon as the man believed the word of Christ and indicated his willingness to be made whole, then went forth the healing power of the Son of God. Now the sinner who is willing to be saved by Jesus Christ, may confidently and absolutely trust him for salvation, without any other evidence than his bare promise. But the matter of special moment for our present purpose is that of the faith of his people for the prosecution of his work. He says for all time and all circumstances this word to us: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and forgive their sins, and heal their land." This is as much a revelation of God as the prior fact that he is gracious and ready to forgive sins and save men. True faith not only takes hold of God's grace and power, but it takes hold of such a word as this and begins at once to put the soul and life into this attitude before him.

It is as certain as that the sun shines, that if God's people throughout this land, would "humble themselves, and pray, and seek his face, and turn from their wicked ways," we would see the mighty power of God manifested from ocean to ocean and from the lakes to the gulf. It is also just as certain that where these exhortations are complied with in any given church, or community, the result of God's grace and power will be seen. What the line of connection between the right attitude of God's people toward him and the salvation of the unsaved is, it is not now necessary to discuss. It is enough to know that there is such a vital connection.—INDEPENDENT.

The History of the Jewish Nation.

The history of the Jewish nation cannot he written alone. It entwines with the history of all other nations; rather, it is the central axis, around which all other history revolves. Indeed, most af the nations of antiquity are only seen at all by the light which flashes from the cloudy pillar which guided the course of the chosen people of the Lord. To write the history of this nation, we must write the history of all nations and of all lands. We shall find the history of this race touching those ancient memories which otherwise had faded from human recollection. The dwellers in Mesopotamia; the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah; the founders of Ninevah; the long-forgotten government of the Hittites; the Assyrians; the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and the Roman empires, are all seen most clearly in their connection with this strange and mysterious people. And since the days of their dispersion, we find them in every quarter of the globe; in all the kingdoms of Europe; in the depths of Asia; in the heart of Africa; separated from all, hated and despised by all: and yet surviving hate and persecution, exile, and oppression; and still dwelling in the presence of their enemies, an anvil which destroys the hammers which smite it; a burning bush which stands unconsumed amid the flames.

Forty, perhaps fifty, centuries rest upon this venerable cotemporary of Egypt, Chaldea, and Troy. The Hebrew defied the Pharaohs; with the sword of Gideon he smote the Midianite, in Jephthah, the children of Ammon. The purple chariot-bands of Assyria went back from his gates humbled and diminished: Babylon, indeed, tore him from his ancient seats, and led him into captivity by strange waters, but not long. He saw the Hellenic flower bud, bloom, and wither upon the soil of Greece. He saw the wolf of Rome, suckled upon the banks of the Tiber, and prowl, ravenous for dominion, to the ends of the earth until paralysis and death laid hold upon its savage sinews. In every kingdom of the modern world there has been a Jewish element. There are Hebrew clans in China; on the steppes of ancient Asia; in the desert wastes of Africa. The most powerful race have not been able to assimilate them,—the bitterest persecution so far from exterminating them, has not eradicated a single characteristic. In mental and moral traits, in form and feature even, the Jew today is the same as when Jerusalem was the peer of Tyre and Babylon. In the greedy energy of the Jewish trader smoulders something of the old fire of the Maccabees. Abraham and Mordecai stands out upon the sculptures of Nineveh, marked by the same eye and beard, and the same nose and jaw by which we just now recognized their descendants.

Infinite Wisdom.

Dr. Bellamy, an eminent divine of the last century, died at Bethlehem, Conn., after a ministry there of fifty years. He was an eloquent preacher and a gifted writer. Two large volumes of his writings on theological subjects are still in print. One of the subjects on which he wrote largely was "The wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin.' He had a firm faith in God.

Three years before his death he was struct with a paralytic affection, which deprived him wholly of the use of his limbs on his left side, and gave a shock to his intellect from which he never recovered.

A neighboring clergyman who called upon him in this condition remarked to him that it was a dark dispensation that had taken him off from his labors when the churches so much needed the benefit of his influence. With deep and solemn emphasis, and seeming to dwell upon every letter of each word, he replied, "Infinite Wisdom."

To the last, shattered as were his mental faculties, he believed in the infinite wisdom of God. And why should we not all thus believe. We have our afflictions, indeed. There may be times when all things seem against us. There are times when the providence of God concerning us are such as greatly to try our faith. And the same is true as regards God's government of the world. The permission of sin is a great mystery. Why a God of infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness, should suffer so great an evil to be introduced to the universe, is beyond our comprehension And it is also a mystery, that he should suffer it to prevail so extensively, and for so many thousand of years. Surely "clouds and darkness are round about him." "His way is in the sea, his path is in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known."

And yet we must not distrust him. We who are but of yesterday, and who know comparatively nothing, should not presume to sit in judgment upon his doings. Infinite wisdom and goodness can not err. "As for God, his way is perfect." "He is right, even in all his ways, and holy in all his works." What we know not now, we shall know hereafter, and then, doubtless, we shall be prepared to join with those that "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

CLERICUS.

All Seen at Last.

It is not too much to think that when God shall have made up all his jewels, and the number of the elect shall be complete, he will make it a part of their happiness to look back from the heights of glory upon all their winding track and to see that every step has been ordered in infinite love; that their sorest trials have been merciful; that their freest choices have been links in God's chain of purpose, that their very sins have been overruled for good. And if this shall appear amazing in the history of an individual, how shall it shine resplendent in the nations of them that are saved, when ten thousand times ten thousand interminglings and entangled lives shall visibly accord with one infinite plan, and centre in one sovereign purpose! the great end of Creation and Providence and Grace, in God's own glory.

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